

1. International News & Bilateral Agreements

India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Enters into Force

- **Details:** The India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement officially entered into force on **20 October 2026**, following its signing in New Delhi on 27 April 2026.
- **Key Benefits:** New Zealand has eliminated customs duties across **100% of its tariff lines** for qualifying Indian goods. This creates immense export opportunities for Indian labour-intensive sectors, including textiles, apparel, leather, footwear, engineering goods, and pharmaceuticals.
- **Strategic Context:** The pact aligns with the India-New Zealand Strategic Partnership: Roadmap to 2030, which targets doubling bilateral trade in goods and services to NZ\$7 billion by 2030.

US-India Diplomatic Talks

- **Details:** US Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrived in Mumbai on a high-level diplomatic visit on 20 October 2026, holding strategic discussions with External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar. Discussions focused on finalising ongoing bilateral trade frameworks, energy cooperation, and supply chain resiliency.

Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2026

- **Details:** Released in October 2026 by Welthungerhilfe in collaboration with the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV) and Helvetas, titled "No Security Without Food Security".
- **India's Ranking:** India has been ranked **100th among 122 countries** evaluated on key indicators including undernourishment,

child wasting, child stunting, and child mortality.

2. National News, Govt Schemes & MoUs

India Approves Currency Swap Facility for Maldives

- **Details:** The Government of India approved the rollover of a **₹3,000 crore (₹30 billion)** currency swap facility to the Maldives under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Currency Swap Framework.
- **Objective:** To bolster the island nation's financial stability, address short-term foreign exchange liquidity requirements, and reinforce India's Neighbourhood First policy and **MAHASAGAR** (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) vision.

Digital India BHASHINI Division & Manipur Government MoU

- **Details:** The Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) signed a landmark MoU with the Government of Manipur during the BHASHINI Rajyam Workshop in Imphal.
- **Objective:** To scale multilingual artificial intelligence technologies, improve e-governance access, and launch localized digital public infrastructure initiatives.

3. Economy, Banking & Finance

NSO Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) – September 2026

- **Details:** The National Statistical Office (NSO) released its periodic labour force figures, indicating positive employment trends across urban and rural sectors.



- **Key Metrics:** The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) rose to **55.5%**, while the overall Unemployment Rate moderated down to **5.0%**, reflecting steady job creation driven by manufacturing and service sector expansions.

Technology Development Board (TDB) Funding Support

- **Details:** TDB signed agreements with high-tech domestic firms **ideaForge** and **QNu Labs** to extend **₹301 crore** in Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) funding, aiming to fast-track indigenous drone tech and quantum cryptography solutions.

4. Environment, Science & Ecology

India's National Red List Assessment for Bird Species

- **Details:** The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change initiated a massive national Red List Assessment for **1,211 bird species** in India under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) framework.
- **Key Institutions Involved:** Led jointly by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), the IUCN SSC Center for Species Survival India-Wildlife Trust of India (CSS India-WTI), and the State of India's Birds (SoIB) initiative.
- **Significance:** The comprehensive exercise aims to scientifically map extinction risks, direct targeted habitat conservation, and evaluate population health shifts.

5. Sports Current Affairs

Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games

- **Details:** Indian para-athletes continued their stellar medal-winning streak at the Asian Para Games in October 2026.

- **Key Highlights:** **Sachin Khilari** led a spectacular Indian clean sweep in the Men's Shot Put F46 event, while **Devender Kumar** secured a prestigious Gold medal, drawing widespread accolades from national leaders for India's growing dominance in adaptive sports.

Practice Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs) for Exams

Q1. The India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which entered into force on 20 October 2026, aims to eliminate customs duties across what percentage of New Zealand's tariff lines for Indian goods?

- A) 50%
- B) 75%
- C) 90%
- D) 100%
- **Correct Answer: D) 100%**
- **Explanation:** New Zealand provides zero customs duty across 100% of its tariff lines for qualifying Indian goods from the agreement's entry into force on 20 October 2026.

Q2. What is India's rank in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2026 out of 122 evaluated countries?

- A) 85th
- B) 92nd
- C) 100th
- D) 114th
- **Correct Answer: C) 100th**
- **Explanation:** India was ranked 100th among 122 countries in the GHI 2026 report titled "No Security Without Food Security".

Q3. Under which framework did India approve the rollover of a ₹3,000 crore currency swap facility to the Maldives in October 2026?

- A) BIMSTEC Financial Facility
- B) SAARC Currency Swap Framework
- C) BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement
- D) Colombo Plan Fund
- **Correct Answer: B) SAARC Currency Swap Framework**
- **Explanation:** The Government of India approved the ₹3,000 crore swap rollover under the SAARC Currency Swap Framework to assist the Maldives' financial stability.

30 Practice MCQs (With Explanations)

International Affairs & Trade

1. On 20 October 2026, the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and which country officially entered into force?

- (a) Australia
- (b) New Zealand
- (c) United Kingdom
- (d) Canada

Answer: (b)

Explanation: The India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement entered into force on 20 October 2026, granting zero-duty access to 100% of eligible Indian tariff lines.

2. In October 2026, India signed 34 commercial agreements valued at nearly CAD 300 million with which nation during a trade mission in Karnataka?

- (a) Germany
- (b) United States
- (c) Canada

(d) Japan

Answer: (c)

Explanation: The Team Canada Trade Mission to India resulted in 34 commercial agreements worth approximately ₹1,800 crore (CAD 300M).

3. What is India's rank in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2026 report?

- (a) 95th
- (b) 100th
- (c) 105th
- (d) 111th

Answer: (b)

Explanation: India ranked 100th out of 122 evaluated nations with a score of 24.1 in the 2026 Global Hunger Index.

4. Under the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) framework, India signed 5 MoUs for Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) in October 2026 with which country?

- (a) Vietnam
- (b) Laos
- (c) Myanmar
- (d) Cambodia

Answer: (c)

Explanation: India and Myanmar signed 5 MoUs for Quick Impact Projects in Naypyitaw under the MGC initiative.

5. Which organization jointly publishes the Global Hunger Index alongside Helvetas?

- (a) FAO
- (b) Welthungerhilfe
- (c) UNDP
- (d) IFPRI

Answer: (b)



Explanation: German humanitarian organization Welthungerhilfe (WHH) publishes the report annually in collaboration with Helvetas and IFHV.

National News & Government Schemes

6. Under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) framework, India approved the rollover of a ₹3,000 crore currency swap facility for which neighboring country?

- (a) Sri Lanka
- (b) Nepal
- (c) Maldives
- (d) Bhutan

Answer: (c)

Explanation: India extended a ₹3,000 crore currency swap rollover to the Maldives under its 'Neighbourhood First' policy.

7. Which state government signed an MoU with the Digital India BHASHINI Division to promote multilingual AI and digital governance?

- (a) Assam
- (b) Manipur
- (c) Nagaland
- (d) Tripura

Answer: (b)

Explanation: The Government of Manipur and Digital India BHASHINI Division signed an MoU in Imphal for local language AI integration.

8. India's national Red List Assessment for bird species launched in October 2026 aims to evaluate how many total bird species under IUCN criteria?

- (a) 850
- (b) 1,050
- (c) 1,211

(d) 1,500

Answer: (c)

Explanation: The MoEFCC-led national bird assessment covers 1,211 bird species across India.

9. In the preliminary IUCN National Red List Assessment, which bird species native to Rajasthan was proposed under the 'Critically Endangered' category?

- (a) Sarus Crane
- (b) Great Indian Bustard
- (c) Pallas's Fish-Eagle
- (d) Indian Roller

Answer: (b)

Explanation: The Great Indian Bustard was proposed as Critically Endangered in the preliminary assessment.

10. What is the target year set by India to complete national assessments for over 11,000 species of flora, fauna, and fungi?

- (a) 2028
- (b) 2030
- (c) 2035
- (d) 2040

Answer: (b)

Explanation: India plans to assess over 11,000 species of plants, animals, and fungi under IUCN standards by 2030.

Economics & Banking

11. According to the NSO's September 2026 Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), what was India's Unemployment Rate (UR)?

- (a) 4.2%
- (b) 5.0%
- (c) 5.8%

(d) 6.1%

Answer: (b)

Explanation: As per NSO PLFS data for September 2026, the Unemployment Rate fell to 5.0%, while the LFPR rose to 55.5%.

12. Which Indian public sector bank won Global Finance's "World's Best Consumer Bank 2026" award for the second consecutive year?

- (a) Punjab National Bank
- (b) Bank of Baroda
- (c) State Bank of India
- (d) Canara Bank

Answer: (c)

Explanation: State Bank of India (SBI) secured the top global award alongside the "Best Bank in India 2026" recognition.

13. According to Swiss Re data cited in climate vulnerability studies, what percentage of India's natural catastrophe exposure remained uninsured as of recent estimates?

- (a) 65%
- (b) 78%
- (c) 85%
- (d) 93%

Answer: (d)

Explanation: Reports highlight that 93% of India's disaster exposure remains uninsured, driving the demand for parametric climate insurance.

14. The VB-G RAM G Act, 2025, which replaces MGNREGA nationwide, increases the statutory employment guarantee from 100 days to how many days?

- (a) 120 days
- (b) 125 days

(c) 150 days

(d) 180 days

Answer: (b)

Explanation: The act increases the guaranteed wage employment framework from 100 days to 125 days per household annually.

15. Which state in India utilizes disaster mitigation funds to purchase multi-year parametric insurance against landslides and extreme rainfall?

- (a) Assam
- (b) Uttarakhand
- (c) Nagaland
- (d) Himachal Pradesh

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Nagaland uses state risk mitigation funding for parametric disaster insurance triggers.

Defense & Space Technology

16. Indian space startup Skyroot Aerospace signed a launch agreement with which US-based space tech firm for satellite deployments?

- (a) Planet Labs
- (b) Reflect Orbital
- (c) Spire Global
- (d) Astra Space

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Skyroot Aerospace partnered with Reflect Orbital to launch dedicated satellites aboard Vikram series rockets.

17. What is the name of Skyroot Aerospace's flagship orbital launch vehicle series?

- (a) Agnikul
- (b) Vikram

- (c) SSLV
(d) PSLV-X

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Skyroot operates the commercially developed 'Vikram' series of launch vehicles.

18. The Technology Development Board (TDB) signed funding agreements worth ₹301 crore with which two Indian deep-tech companies?

- (a) Tonbo Imaging & Skyroot
(b) ideaForge & QNu Labs
(c) Pixxel & Agnikul
(d) Dhruva Space & Bellatrix

Answer: (b)

Explanation: TDB provided RDI support agreements to drone manufacturer ideaForge and quantum encryption company QNu Labs.

Appointments, Awards & Honors

19. Who was appointed as the part-time Chairperson of the Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB)?

- (a) SCL Das
(b) Bhanu Pratap Sharma
(c) K. V. Kamath
(d) N. S. Vishwanathan

Answer: (a)

Explanation: The Department of Financial Services (DFS) formally appointed SCL Das as the part-time Chairperson of FSIB.

20. Reema Nanavaty, who was awarded the prestigious Hillary Rodham Clinton Award, serves as the Director of which organization?

- (a) CRY India
(b) SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association)

- (c) Kudumbashree
(d) Pratham

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Reema Nanavaty was honored at Georgetown University for her pioneering work with SEWA India.

21. Prof. Maneesha Kothekar, who launched the 'CCRAS SPARK 5.0' initiative, is the Chairperson of which national statutory body?

- (a) ICMR
(b) NCISM (National Commission for Indian System of Medicine)
(c) AICTE
(d) PCI

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Prof. Maneesha Kothekar is the Chairperson of NCISM.

Art, Culture, Festivals & Anniversaries

22. Veteran music composer Deva, who passed away in October 2026, was affectionately known by which moniker?

- (a) Isaignani
(b) Thenisai Thendral
(c) Mellisai Mannar
(d) Isai Perarasu

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Tamil composer Deva was fondly given the title 'Thenisai Thendral' (Southern Musical Breeze).

23. Which Supreme Court ruling regarding digital fundamental rights was emphasized in October 2026 legal proceedings?

- (a) Internet access is a fundamental right for all citizens including children

- (b) Internet access is a statutory right only
- (c) Social media access is a Directive Principle
- (d) Internet access applies only to adults

Answer: (a)

Explanation: The Supreme Court reiterated that right to internet access is protected under Articles 19(1)(a) and 21 for all citizens regardless of age.

24. Which research council under the Ministry of Ayush manages the SPARK (Studentship Program for Ayurveda Research Ken) initiative?

- (a) CCRH
- (b) CCRAS
- (c) CCRUM
- (d) CCRYN

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) runs the SPARK program.

25. World Food Day is celebrated globally every year on which date?

- (a) 14 October
- (b) 16 October
- (c) 20 October
- (d) 24 October

Answer: (b)

Explanation: World Food Day is observed annually on 16 October by the FAO and international community.

Important Days & Environment

26. What was the overall theme of the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2026 report?

- (a) "Zero Hunger by 2030"
- (b) "No Security Without Food Security"

- (c) "Nourishing the Planet"
- (d) "Climate and Food Systems"

Answer: (b)

Explanation: The 2026 report carried the central theme "No Security Without Food Security".

27. Under environmental regulation updates in October 2026, Pumped Storage Projects (PSPs) were placed under which category to expedite clearances?

- (a) Category A
- (b) Category B1
- (c) Category B2
- (d) Exempted List

Answer: (c)

Explanation: MoEFCC streamlined off-stream Pumped Storage Projects (PSPs) into Category B2 for accelerated environmental evaluation.

28. In the context of the India-New Zealand FTA, what percentage of bilateral trade is targeted by the Roadmap to 2030?

- (a) NZ\$ 5 billion
- (b) NZ\$ 7 billion
- (c) NZ\$ 10 billion
- (d) NZ\$ 12 billion

Answer: (b)

Explanation: The India-New Zealand Strategic Partnership sets a target of doubling two-way trade to NZ\$ 7 billion by 2030.

29. Which section of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 provides safe harbor protection to digital intermediaries in India?

- (a) Section 66A
- (b) Section 69A
- (c) Section 79

(d) Section 80

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Section 79 of the IT Act outlines conditional safe harbor protection for digital platforms.

30. Which Indian IT hub state hosted the Team Canada Trade Mission where 34 commercial MoUs were finalized?

(a) Maharashtra

(b) Karnataka

(c) Telangana

(d) Tamil Nadu

Answer: (b)

Explanation: The Team Canada Trade Mission events and signings took place in Karnataka.

